

## **“OFF AND RUNNING IN GUANTANAMO BAY”**

Photos and Story by LT Scott A. Gustin

**GUANTANAMO BAY, CUBA (GTMO)** – Off to a great start are the hard working Seabees of U.S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion FOUR (NMCB 4) Detail Guantanamo Bay (GTMO), Cuba. This detail landed with the task of getting the long unused Seabee Camp back up to standards and ready to serve the next Seabee detail sent to GTMO. The “restart” now in its third month, has made considerable improvements in many areas.

The Supply Department completed the painstaking process of inventorying all construction kits, Material Liaison Office (MLO) materials and excess materials for the entire detail. This is not an easy task considering it was completed with only two personnel. Doing more with less seems to be this detail’s motto, and these guys have gotten used to that.

Alfa Company has performed miracles. They inventoried over \$240,000 in automotive repair parts, which were received prior to the detail’s arrival. A total of 15 multi-packs, full of thousands of line items, have been inventoried for accuracy and serviceability. Currently, the Alfa Dawgs are awaiting materials to build shelves to store and label each item by proper location. In addition, the three-person crew managed to perform preventive maintenance checks and interim repairs for equipment and areas dormant since the last battalion departed in January 2003.

Camp maintenance division has been extremely busy making MCD inspections and correcting safety deficiencies.

“The camp was in pretty bad shape when we first arrived,” said Utilitiesman 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Eric Sanchez, Camp Maintenance Supervisor. “We have made several requests for camp maintenance materials in hopes of providing considerable improvements to this compound.”

The biggest challenges in GTMO are the lack of resources and vendors from which to purchase materials. Everything that sustains GTMO comes “on the barge.” We have no FEDEX or UPS; materials either come in via AMC flights (postal mail) or “on the barge”. We are working hard to ensure future details have all the necessary materials and equipment so that they can “hit the ground running” and not have to deal with the frustrations of trying to compete for barge space and priority.

The vertical and horizontal construction crews also have been very busy performing planning and estimating for their upcoming projects. The detail is scheduled to construct three beach cabanas and perform a shore power relocation project. In addition, the horizontal construction crew will begin repairing secondary perimeter roads for the Marine Security Company who patrol the perimeter 24-hours a day.

“I feel confident with the full support of the base Public Works and the 22<sup>nd</sup> Naval Construction Regiment (22 NCR) that we will have all the necessary tools and materials to get our projects done on time,” said Builder 2<sup>nd</sup> Class Robert Ribaric, Crew Leader for the cabanas project.

All work and no play makes a Seabee no fun to be around after a while. But that’s no problem here in GTMO. Granted, no one can leave the base and there isn’t a whole lot to do on the leeward side of the island, but the ‘Bees know how to have fun. On the Windward side, where the camp and living accommodations are located, the

troops find time to participate in paintball excursions, water sport activities, or head over to any of the numerous sporting venues offered on base.

Performing a detail restart requires a lot of work, but luckily the Seabees of NMCB 4 are here making a significant positive impact and major improvements to GTMO and ensure that incoming detail from U.S. Naval Mobile Construction Battalion ONE (NMCB 1) gets off to a great start. Leading from the front and making things happen is what we are all about. Ooh-rah FOUR!

- NMCB FOUR -

Photo Caption:



CE2 Andrew Rapp installs new phone and LAN lines throughout the Administration Building to aid the flow of information for the next Seabee Detail to arrive in GTMO. (U.S. Navy Photo by LT Scott Gustin).



BU1 Jonathan Eisfelder freshens the walls several office spaces with a new coat of paint. (U.S. Navy photo by LT Scott Gustin).